



TRANSNATIONAL LITERATURE

Let Them Burn!

What we expect from poets is that they should avenge evil [...].¹

Let them burn! Let them burn!
Let them pay! Let them pay!

Grey suited stooped man carries red rose

Stadiou Street Wednesday 5th May
ordered to work, union syndicates claim
Marfin Egnatia Bank a burnt out shell
molotov cocktails thrown

Let them burn! Let them burn!
Let them pay! Let them pay!

swings stem wrapped in silver paper

Strike breakers, three in all, asphyxiated
infant in utero sacrificed
anarchists, some observed, blocked the fire brigade
applauded by a chorus of sympathisers

Let them burn! Let them burn!
Let them pay! Let them pay!

behind his back awkward demeanour

Stadiou Street Thursday 6th May
mourning sunrays fan over bouquets
flickering candles and soft toys
create a mausoleum of grief

Let them burn! Let them burn!
Let them pay! Let them pay!

¹ A note on Poetic Justice in Orhan Pamuk, *Other Colours – Essays and a Story*, translated from the Turkish by Maureen Freely (London: Faber and Faber, 2007) 50-51.

pushes through sombre crowd poignant offering

Hooded murderers condemned
collusive rich, politicians should pay
not workers
austerity measures for all, their refrain

Let them burn! Let them burn!
Let them pay! Let them pay!

shakes his head at those who saunter by

Police and media scrutinise the outrage
capture dissonant choruses
of civil disobedience
bankrupt apathy

Let them burn! Let them burn!
Let them pay! Let them pay!

wipes his tears and hurries off silently

Friday 7th May, complacent tourists
indebted to the Acropolis, amble through Plaka
serenaded by public sector protesters in Syntagma Square
Marfin Egnatia family affirms respect for human dignity –
right to work, right to strike

can words ever avenge evil?

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